

Teacher perceptions of student and parent problems

Students benefit most from their schools' offerings when they arrive in good health and are enthusiastic about learning. Students who are apathetic about school reduce their own chances for success and may be disruptive in the classroom. Those who have serious health problems, use alcohol, or abuse drugs are often unable to perform at their best. Parental involvement can improve teachers' ability to work well with individual students and create a school climate conducive to effective learning, but parents sometimes have their own problems that interfere with their ability to provide such support. Teachers' perceptions of the seriousness of student and family problems provide an important indication of the climate in which instruction is taking place.

- In school year 1993–94, 28 percent of public school teachers reported that lack of parent involvement was a serious problem in their schools, a slight increase from 25 percent in school year 1990–91 (see supplemental table 48-1).
- In both years, the percentage of teachers who thought that lack of parent involvement was a serious problem increased as the percentage of low income students who received free or reduced-price lunch increased. The percentage of teachers who thought that parent alcohol or drug abuse was a serious problem in their schools also increased as the percentage of low income students increased.
- Twenty-four percent of all public school teachers reported that student apathy was a serious problem in their schools in school year 1993–94. Teachers in secondary schools were especially likely to do so. The percentage who thought that student apathy was a serious problem was lower in schools with 0–5 percent low income students than in other schools.
- In school year 1993–94, as the percentage of low income students who received free or reduced-price lunch increased, the percentages of public school teachers who reported that student pregnancy, poor nutrition, and poor health were serious problems increased.

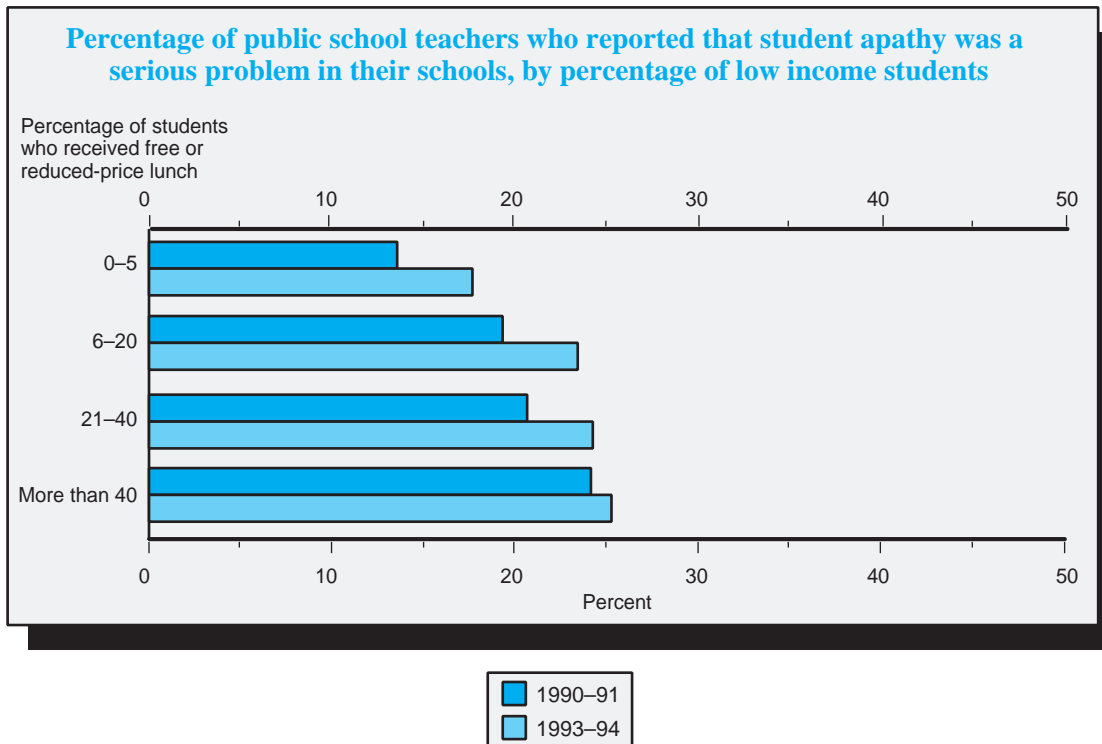
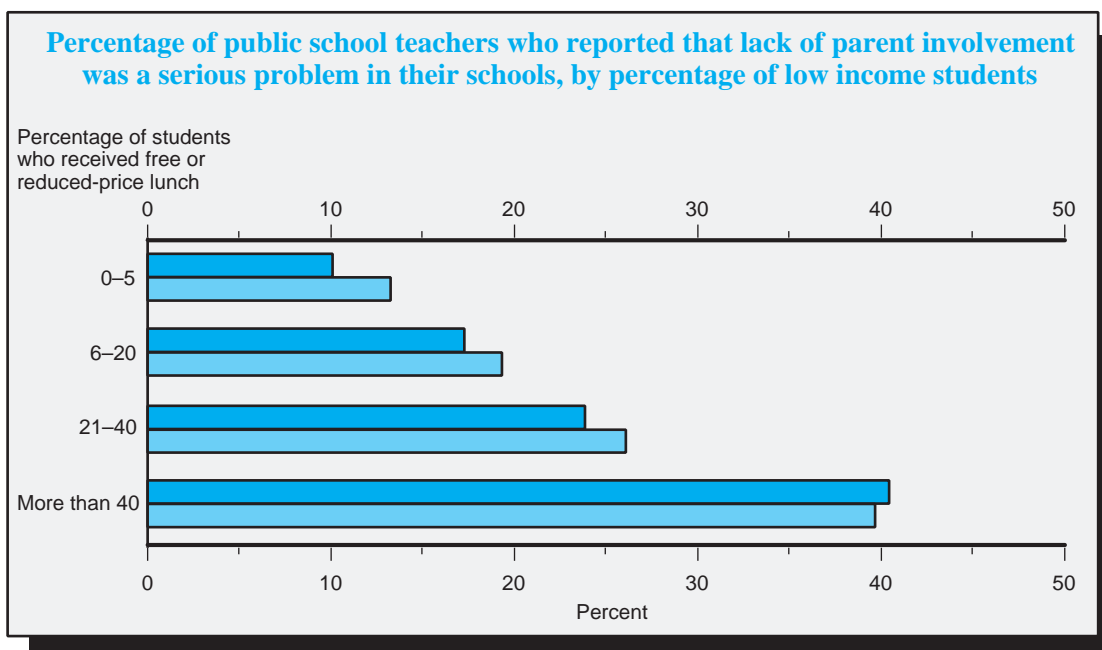
Percentage of public school teachers who reported that various parent and student behaviors and attitudes were serious problems in their schools, by teacher level and percentage of low income students: School year 1993–94

Teacher level and percentage of low income students	Problems associated with parent		Problems associated with student					
	Lack of involvement	Alcoholism and/or drug abuse	Apathy	Alcohol use	Poor nutrition	Drug abuse	Poor health	Pregnancy
Total	27.5	13.0	23.6	9.3	8.2	5.7	5.0	4.1
Teacher level								
Elementary	21.6	13.3	11.8	1.2	9.3	0.6	5.8	2.5
Secondary	34.0	12.7	36.3	18.0	7.0	11.2	4.1	5.7
Percentage of students who received free or reduced-price lunch								
0–5	13.3	5.0	17.7	12.7	2.1	7.0	1.3	2.2
6–20	19.4	7.2	23.5	13.4	3.4	7.4	1.8	3.1
21–40	26.1	11.0	24.3	8.5	7.3	5.3	4.1	3.2
More than 40	39.7	22.1	25.3	5.4	14.5	3.9	9.4	5.5

NOTE: See the supplemental note to *Indicator 40* for the definition of teacher level.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993–94 (Public School and Public School Teacher questionnaires).

Teachers' perceptions of parent and student behaviors and attitudes that are serious problems in their schools: School years 1990–91 and 1993–94



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1990–91 and 1993–94 (Public School and Public School Teacher questionnaires).

Table 48-1 Percentage of public and private school teachers who reported that various parent and student behaviors and attitudes were serious problems in their schools, by selected school and teacher characteristics: School years 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94

Selected school and teacher characteristics	Problems associated with parent		Problems associated with student					
	Lack of involvement	Alcoholism and/or drug abuse	Apathy	Alcohol use	Poor nutrition	Drug abuse	Poor health	Pregnancy
School year 1987–88								
Total	—	—	—	10.6	—	7.3	—	6.2
Public	—	—	—	11.5	—	8.0	—	6.9
Teacher level								
Elementary	—	—	—	2.0	—	1.6	—	1.2
Secondary	—	—	—	22.5	—	15.5	—	13.6
Urbanicity								
Central city	—	—	—	9.0	—	9.0	—	9.1
Urban fringe/large town	—	—	—	11.2	—	8.4	—	5.4
Rural/small town	—	—	—	13.2	—	7.0	—	6.2
Percentage of minority enrollment								
Less than 5	—	—	—	13.1	—	6.4	—	3.8
5–19	—	—	—	12.2	—	8.1	—	4.3
20–49	—	—	—	10.2	—	8.3	—	8.6
50 or more	—	—	—	9.1	—	9.9	—	12.5
Percentage of students who received free or reduced-price lunch								
0–5	—	—	—	16.3	—	10.7	—	4.9
6–20	—	—	—	14.1	—	9.4	—	6.8
21–40	—	—	—	9.9	—	6.4	—	7.5
More than 40	—	—	—	6.6	—	5.9	—	7.1
Private	—	—	—	3.7	—	1.9	—	0.6
School year 1990–91								
Total	22.9	10.8	18.6	7.5	—	3.8	—	5.6
Public	25.4	12.0	20.6	8.2	—	4.3	—	6.4
Teacher level								
Elementary	21.3	11.7	11.5	1.5	—	0.8	—	0.9
Secondary	30.7	12.3	32.3	16.8	—	8.7	—	13.4
Urbanicity								
Central city	35.9	17.8	25.1	6.3	—	4.8	—	8.3
Urban fringe/large town	21.3	9.3	19.0	6.6	—	3.7	—	4.6
Rural/small town	21.6	10.2	18.8	10.7	—	4.3	—	6.5
Percentage of minority enrollment								
Less than 5	15.0	7.4	15.5	9.6	—	3.1	—	3.8
5–19	15.2	7.2	15.4	8.4	—	3.6	—	3.9
20–49	27.3	11.8	22.8	8.1	—	4.8	—	7.3
50 or more	46.6	22.7	29.9	6.7	—	5.8	—	11.2

Table 48-1 Percentage of public and private school teachers who reported that various parent and student behaviors and attitudes were serious problems in their schools, by selected school and teacher characteristics: School years 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94—Continued

Selected school and teacher characteristics	Problems associated with parent		Problems associated with student					
	Lack of involvement	Alcoholism and/or drug abuse	Apathy	Alcohol use	Poor nutrition	Drug abuse	Poor health	Pregnancy
Percentage of students who received free or reduced-price lunch								
0–5	10.1	4.3	13.6	10.6	—	4.8	—	3.5
6–20	17.3	7.0	19.4	10.8	—	4.7	—	6.2
21–40	23.9	10.2	20.7	7.7	—	4.0	—	7.9
More than 40	40.5	21.1	24.2	5.0	—	3.6	—	6.3
Private	4.3	2.2	4.2	2.4	—	0.5	—	0.3
School year 1993–94								
Total	24.6	11.7	21.2	8.5	7.3	5.2	4.5	3.6
Public	27.5	13.0	23.6	9.3	8.2	5.7	5.0	4.1
Teacher level								
Elementary	21.6	13.3	11.8	1.2	9.3	0.6	5.8	2.5
Secondary	34.0	12.7	36.3	18.0	7.0	11.2	4.1	5.7
Urbanicity								
Central city	35.9	17.2	28.0	6.9	12.7	6.3	8.5	7.0
Urban fringe/large town	24.0	10.6	21.9	8.1	7.1	5.7	4.2	3.4
Rural/small town	24.6	12.1	22.0	11.8	5.9	5.4	3.3	2.6
Percentage of minority enrollment								
Less than 5	18.1	7.9	18.5	11.0	3.8	4.3	1.9	1.4
5–19	16.7	7.8	18.5	9.5	4.1	5.1	2.2	2.2
20–49	29.7	13.7	26.6	9.8	8.0	6.7	4.8	4.2
50 or more	46.1	22.8	31.8	6.9	16.8	6.8	11.1	8.3
Percentage of students who received free or reduced-price lunch								
0–5	13.3	5.0	17.7	12.7	2.1	7.0	1.3	2.2
6–20	19.4	7.2	23.5	13.4	3.4	7.4	1.8	3.1
21–40	26.1	11.0	24.3	8.5	7.3	5.3	4.1	3.2
More than 40	39.7	22.1	25.3	5.4	14.5	3.9	9.4	5.5
Private	4.0	2.6	4.5	3.2	1.4	1.3	0.9	0.8

— Not available.

NOTE: See the glossary for the definition of urbanicity. See the supplemental note to this indicator for the definition of teacher level.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1987–88, 1990–91, and 1993–94 (Public School, Private School, Public School Teacher, and Private School Teacher questionnaires).

Table S48 Standard errors for the text table in *Indicator 48*

Teacher level and percentage low income students	Problems associated with parent		Problems associated with student					
	Lack of involvement	Alcoholism and/ or drug abuse	Apathy	Alcohol use	Poor nutrition	Drug abuse	Poor health	Preg- nancy
Total	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2
Teacher level								
Elementary	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.2
Secondary	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
Percentage of students who received free or reduced-price lunch								
0-5	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.2
6-20	0.8	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2
21-40	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2
More than 40	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.4

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993-94 (Public School and Public School Teacher questionnaires).